

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 January 2017

by Patrick Whelan BA(Hons) Dip Arch MA MSc ARB RIBA RTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 17 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/16/3161739

14 Clarence Road, Chiswick, London W4 3AS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr James Tansey against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00268/14/P3, dated 15 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 11 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a hip to gable and rear roof extension with two front roof windows to the house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. In the interests of clarity and accuracy I have taken the description of development in the banner heading above from the Council's decision notice.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character of the host building and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wellesley Road Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The Council does not object to the proposed rear dormer or skylights. Its concern is that the hip to gable extension would not be in keeping with the host building and that it would detract from the character of the house and the CA.
 5. This part of the CA contains buildings from a range of periods including pairs of grand 3-storey villas and their less imposing 2-storey counterparts in paired and terraced form in this street, to more varied and modest housing in Wellesley Road. The house at the opposite end of the terrace, of which the appeal site forms part, has a raised gable end, which it is suggested was formed following the destruction of part of the terrace. Alongside it stands a pair of modern, gable-ended, semi-detached houses.
 6. While the majority of roofs in this street are hipped, the wider area does include other forms of roof to terraces, however these appear to be on houses which incorporate gables or parapets as part of the original design. While I appreciate that there are some examples of hip to gable development on terraces or pairs of houses in the area, these are limited in number. They have not overwhelmed the remaining buildings which retain hipped roofs to the degree where their significance as part of
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the characteristic townscape of the CA is undermined. As such, the roofscape of this house which retains its original hipped form, and which is conspicuous in the street scene and in views from neighbouring houses, contributes much to the coherence of roof forms in the CA, and is an important component of its significance. Its alteration to a gable form would result in the loss of a distinctive element of original townscape of the host building and the introduction of a blind, raised flank wall. This would be prominent in the street scene and would undermine the spacious appearance of the roofscape in this part of the CA.

7. I have taken into account that the other end of this terrace has a gable. However, the length of surviving terrace is sufficient to avoid an awkwardness in symmetry between the two ends. Moreover, the gabled end, now screened in long street views by the modern housing built alongside it, is less exposed in the street scene than the roof in this case. I appreciate that the alteration would provide additional living space, but this does not outweigh the harm I have identified above.
8. For the reasons set out above, the proposed development would harm the character of the host building and fail to preserve the appearance of the CA in accordance with the requirements of section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended, the special attention to which, the Courts have determined, I am required to give considerable importance and weight.
9. It would be in conflict with Policy CC4 of the Local Plan 2015-2030 Volume One, which sets out that proposals are expected to conserve and take opportunities to enhance any heritage asset and its setting in a manner appropriate to its significance. It expects that in the case of alterations and extensions to a heritage asset, a proposal should demonstrate that it is sympathetic in terms of form to the original building. It would also be at odds with Policies CC1, CC2, and SC7, which support high quality architecture and seek to ensure that development maintains the character of the area and conserves and takes opportunities to enhance the heritage of the Borough.
10. The development does not meet the aims of paragraphs 58 and 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework. They advise that planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments respond to local character and history and reflect the identity of local surroundings, and that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. While in the context of paragraphs 133 and 134 of the Framework I would, in relation to the CA as a whole, define the magnitude of the harm identified as less than substantial, there is no public benefit from the proposal sufficient to outweigh that harm.

Conclusion

11. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA as required by the Act, and considered the policies in the Development Plan and the Framework. I have also considered the additional living space which the proposed development would provide, and the other matters raised in evidence. However, none of these outweigh the harm that I have identified to the appearance of the Wellesley Road Conservation Area and for this reason the appeal is dismissed.

Patrick Whelan

Inspector